

13 OCT 66

I was in my rack in Berthing 3. It was sometime between 1100 & 1200. I was awakened by a loud explosion and thrown upward about three inches. I didn't know what happened, but I knew that anything that could throw me out of my rack had to be bad.

When I awoke, looking around, all I saw was the look of confusion on everybody's faces. We initially thought that a fuel line had exploded. When I made my way to the main deck, I knew that the unimaginable had just taken place. The smoke, dust and fuel vapors were the first things that I noticed. Everyone was yelling to go to our GQ stations, but there was no way to get there. We couldn't go past midships, and we couldn't go topside. I was stuck on the starboard side. I saw one of the guys that I work with & he was covered in black dust. He said he was O.K. and said he thinks it was a bomb or missile, somewhere around the galley. At this point, I knew things were going from bad to horrible.

I have only been on the Cole for a little over a month, so I didn't know everybody. I guess this was good in one respect, because I didn't recognize the dead and injured, so I remained calm. My main concern was to make sure that the injured were removed from the scene to prevent further harm & also we needed to stop the flooding & make sure that all fires were contained.

The reports started coming in immediately. Somebody told me that SN [REDACTED] was dead & reality set in. After that, the fire parties were running by, and I was pushed into the log room. Since the log room is a fairly decent size, that is where they started to bring the wounded. The first person they brought in was SN [REDACTED]. I didn't know that a human being could sustain this much damage and continue living. I held his head & continued talking to him, giving him reassurance. He wasn't responding in anyway, but I knew in my mind that he could hear me, because he kept gasping for breath after breath. He didn't give up until [REDACTED]

later. They brought three other people into the log room, and they also had two people in the P-way, who were injured. It was extremely difficult to move about the ship, because the messdecks were destroyed, we couldn't move forward to the battle dressing station, and we weren't authorized to go topside for fear of sniper fire or another bombing. The fire teams had to climb over the wounded to get to the flooding + fires, but they got the job done.

From that point on, we moved everybody from the skin of the ship to the flight deck. HMCM + HMC set up a TRIAG there. The remainder of my time on the ship was spent trying to patch pipes + control damage.

We were then called topside to get volunteers to donate blood. I believe there were 19 of us that went to the hospital. After we donated our blood, they drove most of my shipmates back to the ship, but they wanted me to stay behind as an escort for the injured. That is what I did for the rest of the evening.

Now I am waiting to find out what is going to happen to the ship + the crew. The whole crew was terribly injured, some physically + the rest of the crew mentally. I am ~~still~~ hoping and praying that me and my shipmates can get someplace safe and sanitary in the very near future. Until that happens, we won't be able to shed some of the grief inside. We are all still in fight or flight mode.

In hind sight, I am extremely grateful that I am on a ship with an extraordinary crew. We pulled together like a team, actually more like a family, to save ourselves, our shipmates + our ship.

Very Respectfully,

Amt

14 OCT 00

This is my statement about the events involved in pulling into Aden, Yemen.

I was on watch, (QMOW 02-07). At approx. 0500, we started heading North towards the harbor. Around 0520, the CO came on the bridge and asked what time we would be at the pilot pick-up point. I told him 0630. We then began to call the harbor control on both channel 13 & 16. The pilot wouldn't answer us, but I did hear him answer other ships who were pulling in. Since we couldn't get a hold of harbor control, we had to circle outside of the harbor for about an hour.

I do not know if this is normal procedure, or if something else was going on. I just wanted to make sure the info was passed on.

Very Respectfully,

Encl (66)
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